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PUTNAM, ALBIGENCE WALDO
(1799-1869)
PAPERS
1775-1869

(THS Collection)

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Date Completed: September 19, 1984

Revised by:

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April 1998

Accession Number: THS 428
Location: XXX-A-5 (THS II-A-5)
Microfilm Accession Number: 1565

MICROFILMED

INTRODUCTION

The Albigeance Waldo Putnam papers concern the career of Albigeance Waldo Putnam (1799-1869), lawyer, businessman, public official, historian, writer, and one of the founders of the Tennessee Historical Society. These papers were presented to the Tennessee Historical Society by Miss Julia Putnam, Mrs. Felicia Putnam Russell, and Mrs. W. O. O'Neal Perkins of Nashville, Tennessee. A request was made by the TSLA Public Services Section to check the arrangement and correct the finding aid. Certain documents were found to be placed in incorrect folders. This was corrected and all documents were placed in new acid free materials.

The collection is contained in one Hollinger box. Single photocopies of unpublished writings in the Albigeance Waldo Putnam Papers may be made for scholarly research.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The A. W. Putnam Papers, containing approximately twenty items, span the years 1775 to 1869. The collection deals primarily with events surrounding the life and career of Albigeance Waldo Putnam, and consists of associations/institution records, an autobiography (original), a biography of Putnam, church records, correspondence, Putnam's diary, genealogical data, lists, military records, photographs/drawings, and obituaries.

The collection includes a list of all of the Presidents of the Tennessee Historical Society, including the term served by Putnam. The autobiography and biography of Putnam document his career as a college student, store clerk, lawyer, bank director, public official, businessman, historian, and writer. Genealogical data for the Putnam family can also be found in Putnam's autobiography and biography.

The historical value of this collection for the researcher is to be found in the Putnam's autobiography and diary. These documents will provide the researcher an eyewitness account of the elementary social and economic life of the early settlers of Ohio, Mississippi, and Tennessee. In his autobiography, Putnam describes his early life in Ohio, travel in the early 1800's; his first impressions of slavery; the topography of the Port Gibson-Warrenton, Mississippi area; legal cases and issues involving Choctaw Indians in Mississippi; dueling practices in the Old South; and his move to Tennessee.

Putnam's Civil War diary is a first-hand account of Federal and Confederate troop movements and battles at Murfreesboro, Franklin, and Nashville, Tennessee. He includes interviews that he had with Generals Bragg and Rosecrans. The account provides a vivid picture of the suffering and destruction in the aftermath of the battles in Middle Tennessee.

Putnam is perhaps best remembered for his publication of *History of Middle Tennessee or Life and Time of General James Robertson* in 1859, and his other literary contributions in the writing of manuscripts and essays.

The collection reveals that Putnam was one of the founders of the Tennessee Historical Society. It is documented that he found and published the original manuscript of the Cumberland Compact, now preserved in the archives of the Tennessee Historical Society.

The Putnam Papers include the original commission of Israel Putnam as Major General of the Army of the United Colonies, by order of The Congress, convening at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1775.

The Putnam Papers list several other manuscripts, essays, sketches, and documents contained in the files of the Tennessee Historical Society (see Lists for index).

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Albigence Waldo Putnam

- 1799 Born, March 11 at Belpre, Ohio - near Marietta. Son of Aaron Waldo and Charlotte (Loring) Putnam. His mother was the daughter of Judge Daniel Loring from Salem, Massachusetts. Putnam's father came to the Territory North of the Ohio in the Fall of 1788 and settled near Marietta, Ohio. Putnam was the grandson of Israel Putnam who served as a Major General in the War of Independence.
- ca. 1818-1820 Attended school at Ohio University, Athens, Ohio. Received A. B. Degree.
- ca. 1821 Clerked in General Nathaniel Cashing's Retail Dry Goods Store at Gallipolis, Ohio. Studied French with French people who were the original settlers of the town. He also studied German, Italian, and Spanish.
- 1821 Studied law with Samuel Finley Vinton at Gallipolis, Ohio. He obtained a license to practice law as Attorney and Counselor, and was admitted to the bar at age 21.
- 1822 Mother died, September 18, at Marietta, Ohio.
- 1822 Father died, September 21, at Marietta, Ohio.
- 1822 Arrived December 24, at Port Gibson, Mississippi, after a boat trip down the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers. He lived with his uncle, Israel Loring. Practiced law and established a collection business, enforcing collection of past due debts and promissory notes on a commission basis. He later became a Director in the Bank of Mississippi.
- 1825 Married in April to Catherine Ann Sevier, daughter of George W. Sevier, and eldest granddaughter of General John Sevier.
- 1830 Became an elder in the Presbyterian Church.
- 1834 Wife Catherine died - Children: George Sevier (died in infancy) - Waldo Washington (grew to adulthood, was married and died in 1865) - one daughter (name unknown).

- 1834 Married, in June to Cornelia Virginia Sevier, sister of first wife - Children: Three daughters (names unknown) and two sons - George Seylor Putnam and Israel Putnam.
- 1836 Moved from Port Gibson, Mississippi, to Nashville, Tennessee, and purchased William H. White's place. Practiced law and engaged in literary pursuits.
- 1839 Purchased "Waverly Place" in September--two miles south of Nashville on Franklin Pike.
- 1839 September, elected Ruling Elder, First Presbyterian Church, Nashville, Tennessee.
- 1846 Wife, Cornelia Virginia, died.
- 1846 Found and published original manuscript of the Cumberland Compact.
- ca. 1848 Married, Mrs. Mary O. (Walker) Edwards of Columbia, Tennessee.
- ca. 1849 Erected marble monument to John Sevier at Nashville.
- 1849-1857 Vice-President, Tennessee Historical Society.
- 1851 Sketch of the "Life of John Sevier of Tennessee", written by A. W. Putnam, published by John H. Wheeler in *History of North Carolina* (Philadelphia).
- ca. 1854-1857 President, Agricultural Machinery Manufacturing Company, Nashville, Tennessee.
- 1857-1860 President, Tennessee Historical Society.
- 1858 Wife, Mary, died. Two sons (who died) and two daughters by this marriage.
- ca. 1862-1863 Lived at summer home, "Wayside Cottage" near Manchester, Coffee, County, Tennessee.
- 1863 Returned to "Waverly Place", family residence, Nashville.

ca. 1866-1869 Employed as Deputy Collector, United States Internal Revenue
Collector's Office, Nashville, Tennessee.

1869 Died, January 20, at Nashville, Tennessee.

SOURCES:

Autobiography--A. W. Putnam (1799-1869).

Biography of A. W. Putnam, Mrs. O'Neal Perkins, 1902.

Diary--A. W. Putnam, 1863.

Moore, Mrs. John Trotwood, *The Tennessee Historical Society*, 1849-1918,
Tennessee Old and New, Sesquicentennial Edition, 1796-1946.

Nashville - City Directory, 1868.

Obituary of A. W. Putnam, *Union and American* [Newspaper], Nashville, Tennessee.

Pamphlet, *Tennessee Historical Society*, 1849, [1983].

Phelan, James, *History of Middle Tennessee or Life and Times of General James
Robertson* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1971 ed.), Introduction.

Tennessee Historical Quarterly, Vol. 3, p. 66, pp. 197-199, 201, 219; Vol. 5, p p.14 and
128; Vol. 8, p. 7; Vol. 9, p. 8; Vol. 11, pp. 65-66; and Vol. 17, pp. 10-11.

CONTAINER LIST

Box 1

1. Associations--Tennessee Historical Society--Presidents, 1849-1983.
2. Publications--Tennessee Historical Society Magazine--A. W. Putnam.
3. Autobiography--A. W. Putnam.
4. Biography--A. W. Putnam.
5. Church Records--First Presbyterian Church, Nashville, TN, 1814-1868.
6. Correspondence--Provine, W. A.
7. Diary--A. W. Putnam, 1863.
8. Genealogical Data--Wm. Giles Harding.
9. Lists--Military Personnel located in Territory South of the Ohio River, 1791.
10. List--Documents--A. W. Putnam.
11. Military Records--Commission--Maj. Gen. Israel Putnam, 1775.
12. Obituaries--A. W. Putnam.
13. Drawing--Facsimile of delineation engraved on powder horn of Israel Putnam.
14. Photograph--Commission, Israel Putnam.

NAME INDEX

This name index for the correspondence in the A. W. Putnam Papers. Included are the dates of the letters, information regarding their contents, and names of recipients. The last numbers refer to the box and folder in which the material can be found.

[Provine, W. A.] to Mrs. Felicia Putnam Russell, 1928, re: Acknowledgment of donation of father's Civil War Diary to the Tennessee Historical Society, 1-6.

Russell, Mrs. Felicia Putnam to Dr. [W. A.] Provine, 1928, re: Donation of the Civil War Diary written by her father, A. W. Putnam, 1-6.